Hospital Professionals at the Table

Public, professional and proud

OPSEU SEFPO

October 2009

$1 Billion for Consultants ... Delays for Professionals

At arbitration in late June, the Hospitals told us there was no money to pay for the improvements that we are seeking – even though our proposals are relatively modest. The argument put forward by the hospitals centred on a "fragile economy" and the negative impact of our proposed increases.

During the past few months there has been a barrage of revelations about inappropriate spending in the Health Ministry. Millions of dollars has been wasted on untendered contracts to overpaid, over priced private consultants in the e-health debacle. Meanwhile we are still waiting.

The Provincial Auditor in his annual report has identified $1 billion dollars spent on this initiative with virtually nothing to show. It has also come to light that the Ministry of Health has been using public hospitals as conduits to pay Ministry executives salaries that greatly exceed public sector guidelines – a practice that the Ministry has attempted to justify on the basis of attraction and retention. (The same Ministry that wants to ignore the serious attraction and retention issues for our professions!)

In the meantime, the Arbitration Board is still deliberating our issues. This sort of time frame is not unusual. Our history shows a variance in time taken by Arbitrators to put out an award. Part of the reason for ongoing deliberations, is that the Board had asked for additional submissions over the summer, prompted by an Ontario Hospital Association request. At the end of July Hospitals asked the Board to consider the settlements for the City of Toronto and the City of Windsor – even though it should have been clear to all that these organizations are not relevant comparators. The Union argued that the Board should not consider these settlements. Ultimately, the Board decided to invite both parties to make additional submissions with any information they thought relevant. The deadline was August 11 for any new evidence and the parties were given until August 18 to respond to the other side's submission. The Union's submission argued that the municipal settlements were not relevant, and provided information on settlements and economic indicators that occurred after the June hearing that we felt supported our demands.

Since then, the Hospitals have asked that the Board consider the recent central hospital settlements for CUPE and CAW. The Board held a conference call on the evening of October 7th to hear the parties' positions on the request. The Union strongly objected to the request on the grounds that the Board had previously set a firm cut-off date for further evidence of August 11th and to revisit that cut-off would prejudice the interests of the Union by creating more delay. OPSEU argued this would

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negatively impact our members because often provisions in arbitration awards become effective the date of the award is handed down.

The Board has not yet made a decision on whether to accept further submissions. We will update you when we receive that decision.

Your team believes it is shameful that millions of health dollars have been funneled to private sector cronies of the Hospitals and overpaid executives, while the Hospitals are forcing us to jump through hoops to prove our case. We can only conclude that the Hospitals are more interested in pleasing their paymaster (the Ontario government) than in having a constructive relationship with their own employees.

We concur that 7 months without wage increases is inappropriate. Together with your support we are making every effort to bring this to a successful conclusion.

Continue to show Solidarity. Wear your buttons and T-Shirts to remind the Hospitals that …

We are Important Too!

HPD Local Issues

Our Local Issues Arbitration dates are tentatively set for January 8 and 27, April 26, May 31 and June 11 and 25, for those locals that were unable to achieve a settlement. The Arbitrator seized with our case is Stephen Raymond and our nominee is Cam Nelson. The dates are based on the availability of the Board members. We have requested earlier dates, should any become available.

In Solidarity...

Your HPD Central Team

Yves Shank, Team Chair - Local 659
Hôpital Régional de Sudbury Regional Hospital

Bryan Mitchell, Team Vice-Chair - Local 570
Mount Sinai Hospital

Boris (Bo) Prus - Local 715
Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre

Sara Labelle - Local 348
Lakeridge Health Corp

Hervé Cavanagh - Local 466
Perth & Smith Falls District Hospital

Sandi Blancher - Local 106
London Health Sciences Centre

Barbara Barry - Local 380
Muskoka Algonquin Health Care

Martha Mercer De Santis - OPSEU Researcher
Moya Beall - OPSEU Negotiator

Authorized for distribution

Warren (Smokey) Thomas,
President